



## Quick Update.....May 28th, 2021

**Daily Self Screening** – Unfortunately, we have some members who don't do their daily self screening and are still coming to work with symptoms and putting co-workers at risk. This is, to be blunt, unacceptable. Everyone coming to work needs to be doing their self screening and going through the questions honestly to determine if you should be at work or not. Make sure you're doing your screening and if you do fail for one reason or another – you call in with Code 80. You'll be required to submit a negative test result before returning to work and you can mention that when booking your Covid test in order to make sure you can get a test done.

**Strike Fund Deduction** - The \$5/pay deduction to increase our strike fund will begin on the June 10<sup>th</sup> pay. You will see an additional \$5 coming off that will be going directly to our Strike Fund as was presented and voted on and approved by the National President's Office.

**Deployment Update** – We have 5 head caretakers who are currently working at schools that are closing at the end of June. Those 5 members will need to be placed in new head caretaker positions before any other head caretaker postings will be available through the normal posting process. Right now, aside from a bunch of current head caretakers retiring and those positions being used for deployment – it's unclear when postings for head caretaker positions will resume.

**Enhanced Cleaning Positions** – With the release of the Education budget for 2021/22 school year, there is currently a provision to continue with the enhanced cleaning that began with the Covid pandemic. HWDSB was funded for 22 full time positions and that will continue for the first half of the school year beginning in September with board approval. Exactly how these positions will be filled and how they will be dispersed through the system is unclear yet, but I expect there to be discussions around those issues with the employer between now and September.

**School Resuming In June?! -** I waited as long as I could before sending out the update this morning in case there was some quick press conference or announcement but with my luck lately, it'll come this afternoon or over the weekend.....

While Doug and his cronies are stirring everyone up over kids returning to schools for a couple weeks before summer, everyone is guessing and making assumptions and causing anxiety and stress for parents and education workers across the province. While I have my own opinions on kids returning, until there is a definite announcement one way or the other - we have no way of knowing what's going to happen. I know we're ready and willing to continue to do the work we have done all year and be the reason why schools have remained as safe as possible with the funding and tools we've been given if that's what the decision is. And if kids don't return, we're also ready to hit the ground running like my friends Russ and Al like to say and get at our summer cleaning routines and make sure everything is in great shape for September.

For now, we continue on with what we have been doing and when there is an announcement that affects us, I'm sure there will be lots of communication from both the employer and the Local to all members about what's happening.

**Benefits –** Once you gain a permanent position with the employer, you have benefits with the Education Workers Benefit Trust. The trust was came into effect a few years ago and created a plan that had the same benefits for all OSBCU members across the province instead of individual school boards having plans for our members. Each year in accordance with our collective agreement, the government contributes a defined amount towards the benefits cost of each permanent member across the province. This year, that amount is \$5,599.45. If you have a permanent position and don't make use of your benefits package, that money is going to someone else. For years, I didn't use my benefits except for the occasional dentist checkup and prescription. Then I took the time to read through what we are entitled to and to take my health a little more seriously. I started going to the chiropractor, I got some orthotics for my shoes (yes, I'm that old LOL) and have appointments booked for a few other things I had no idea we were entitled to to help look after ourselves. Bottom line is this – take some time to read through what our benefits are at [www.cupe-ewbt.ca](http://www.cupe-ewbt.ca) and start taking better care of yourself for your own sake and your loved ones too!

Take care, have a great weekend!

Blake